REE THOUGHTS

ON THE LATE

APPLICATION

OF SOME

ISSENTING MINISTERS

TO

PARLIAMENT;

IN A

L E T T E R

TO THE

REV. *******

HEREIN is proved, that the PRAYER of their PETITION originated with SENTIMENT:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

REMARKS ON THE NEW TEST;

th a few STRICTURES on the different PIECES ublished in DEFENCE of the said APPLICATION.

BY EDWARD HITCHIN, B. D.

LONDON.

NTED and SOLD by A. BELL, No. 8. near the SARACEN'S-HEAD, ALDGATE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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A

LETTER, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

MY long Intimacy with you, and the happy Trial I have had of your inviolable Friendſhip, are the Reaſons why, upon the preſent Occaſion, I communicate to you, in a public Manner, my Sentiments relative to any Application from Diſſenting Miniſters, for Relief reſpecting Subſcription to the doctrinal Articles of the Church of *England*; and the View I have of the Method in which the late Application to Parliament has been conducted.

My

My further Reaſon for addreſſing myſelf to you, Sir, is, that you are in the proper Meaning of the Expreſſion, a RATIONAL DISSENTER; and tho' you are a Calviniſt, your Abilities, extenſive Reading, Character and Standing in the religious World, place you as a Scholar, and a Gentleman, far above the Contempt of thoſe who value themſelves for the extraordinary Illumination they have, ſuperior to what the Reformers poſſeſſed: That Light which the moſt eminently learned and pious Men of the laſt Century, could not pretend to.

I would deſire you, Sir, in reading this Letter, to remember, that the Author has no perſonal Diſreſpect to any of the Reverend Committee; and that he is as real an ENEMY to INTOLERANCE, as any one of thoſe Gentlemen. I would further add, that no one is anſwerable for any Thing that may be found culpable in this Pamphlet, but the Author himſelf; who deſires to write with Decency and Truth; not "AWE-STRUCK" by his Brethren's Cenſures, any more than Dr. *Kippis* is, by the ſuppoſed Severity of the Governors of the Church.

I profeſs myſelf to be, upon Principle, of the Denomination among Proteſtant Diſſenters, ſtiled Independent or Congregational. The Conſequence

of

of which is, that under the Toleration I now enjoy, I am allowed to be a Paſtor of ſuch a Congregation, as I think is agreeable, in ſome happy Meaſure, to the Plan which our Redeemer gave to his Apoſtles; therefore upon MY PRINCIPLE, I cannot think it my Duty, to trouble Government with a Prayer for Relief, that I do not ſtand in need of; as there is no Diſpoſition in Government to diſtreſs my Conſcience on the Account of Religion.

The natural Right of every Member of civil Society, is, I ſuppoſe in general, plain to every reflecting Mind; but to enter upon this Subject would carry me from my Deſign.

As to the human Mind, I freely acknowledge it to be an Empire that is only to be ſubject to him who founded it, to our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, the univerſal Sovereign: For which reaſon I declare to you, Sir, and proclaim it to the whole World, that my ONLY Rule of Faith and Practice is contained in the inſpired canonical Writings of the Old and New Teſtament; and that no Perſon or Perſons has or have a Right to command my Conſcience. But as a Chriſtian, under ſo mild a Government, I think it my Duty to acknowledge what I believe, without diſputing the Right of the Magiſtrate. Whether the Civil Magiſtrate has any,

and

and what Powers, in Matters of Religion, have been the Subject of laboured Pieces.—To draw the exact Line is not perhaps quite ſo eaſy as may have been conceived by many in this enlightened Age.

Dr. *Furneaux*, in his Letters to the honourable Mr. *Juſtice Blackſtone*, aſſerts, that the Magiſtrates Authority does not extend to any but *overt* acts; and yet we find the Committee, of which that Gentleman is one, praying for the exertion of that AUTHORITY; and propoſing Terms on which they are willing to ſubmit to it: Though even this Submiſſion may admit of ſome ſmall Excuſe, if what Dr. *Kippis*, another of the Committee, ſays, be true, "That an unjuſt Demand, does not imply "an Acknowledgment of the AUTHORITY by which "it is made. Such a Demand may be honeſtly "complied with, when we only teſtify a Truth, in "order to avoid a real Evil, and to gain an impor-"tant Good," Page 60.

The learned Doctor introduces this Sentence in his Deſcant upon the MODERN TEST, which was carried up to both Houſes of Parliament:—A TEST, I ſhall think it my Duty to examine before I conclude this Letter.

Immediately upon the Quotation of the new-invented Teſt, the Doctor obſerves in the following Words,

Words, "Whether the Magiſtrate has, or has "not, a Right to aſk us who, or what we are, can "it be criminal in us to declare our common De- "nomination and Principle? Can it be criminal "in us to ſay, that we are Chriſtians and Proteſtants?" —Agreeable to this DESCANT, I aſſert, that it is not criminal. Nor can it, upon the Doctor's Judgment, be criminal in me to be willing, by the Deſire of the Magiſtrate, to ſubſcribe what I believe.

But then, Sir, I do not make my Declaration VIVA VOCE, or with my Hand, complying with an unavoidable Neceſſity, contrary to my Conſcience, "in order to avoid a real Evil, and to gain an "important Good." No, Sir, Scripture does not allow me to do Evil that Good may come from it. This is Antinomianiſm, that a RATIONAL Calviniſt cannot ſubmit to.—His Judgment is better informed, and his Conſcience is too tender to drop into ſo baſe a Compliance.

Therefore, in my View, it is unneceſſary for me to join in an Application for Relief in the Caſe of Subſcription, inaſmuch as I think it my Honour to ſubſcribe with my Hand, what I believe with my Heart. The Principles I imbibed in my Youth, I, at Years of Maturity, find not the leaſt Occaſion to renounce.

This

This leads me to give you another Reaſon why I was, and why I now am, againſt the Application to Parliament; namely, being too well convinced in my own Mind, that the Matter was firſt ſtarted and ſprang from a Diſlike to thoſe Articles, the Toleration calls upon us to ſubſcribe, and I will add, whatever Declarations have been made to the contrary, or however ſolemn thoſe Declarations may have been, I am confirmed from the ſtrongeſt Facts, that had it not been for the Diſlike to the Doctrinal Articles, the Application to Parliament would never have been propoſed.†

This, Sir, was a Remark I made to a valuable Brother, belonging to the general Body, upon the firſt Notice I received of the Deſign. Upon this Occaſion I cannot but adopt the ſtriking Words of that great Champion for Truth, who ſays, "We "ſhould have had none of this Hurricane about "Creeds

† I. Becauſe many Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters cannot ſubſcribe to SEVERAL DOCTRINES contained in the Articles aforeſaid, apprehending them to be contrary to the Senſe of Scripture; and others cannot ſubſcribe to EVERY PART of the ſaid Articles, though they may believe them in the main.

V. Becauſe the Act of Toleration, profeſſing to give eaſe to ſcrupulous Conſciences, and not giving eaſe to thoſe who in conſcience cannot ſubſcribe the Articles required, doth not anſwer its propoſed End. *See the* Reaſons of the Caſe, &c.

"Creeds, and human Forms, if a Spirit of "ARIANISM was not gone forth. They that are "angry at the MATTER of our Confeſſion, have "ſet others a quarrelling at the FORM: And 'tis "a Pity that any who love the Truth, ſhould be "viſibly conducted by thoſe that hate it."— See *Bradbury*'s Sermons, preached at *Pinners-Hall*, 1723, dedicated to thoſe that ſupport and encourage the Merchants Lecture in *Broad-Street*.

I now proceed to give the Reaſons I have, for believing that the APPLICATION ORIGINATED WITH SENTIMENT,—Reaſons founded upon Facts.

I ſuppoſe it will be allowed, that the Gentlemen who have been moſt active, and that are now remarkably ſo, are in general, thoſe who are not friends to the peculiar Articles called Calviniſtical. Without Doubt thoſe Gentlemen have a Right to think for themſelves, and with Modeſty to declare freely their Sentiments. But why a Man ſhould be afraid to own the God he worſhips, I do not underſtand; unleſs he is aſhamed of his Deity, or is doubtful about the way of his Acceptance. If this is the Caſe, he hath not any Occaſion to trouble himſelf concerning ſubſcribing, or non-ſubſcribing; inaſmuch as he has no Articles of Faith; his Mind is in the State that Nature at firſt was, WITHOUT FORM AND VOID; and therefore totally

unfit to ſuſtain the honourable Character of being a Miniſter of Jeſus.

It is evident, Sir, that theſe Gentlemen had the Articles in View in their Application, from Mr. *Iſrael Mauduit*'s book, PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE.* And I confeſs it exceedingly alarmed me to ſee how much Streſs that Gentleman laid upon the Illumination of the Age, as to Religion, when the true State of the Caſe is, that the Tenets of *Pelagius* and *Socinus*, were never more propagated, nor the Notions of Deiſts and Fataliſts, ever ſo prevailing as at this Time.

Mr. *Mauduit*, while he defends the Cauſe he eſpouſes, has choſen moſt illiberally to reflect upon the Methodiſt Clergy, in order obliquely to depreciate the old-faſhioned Diſſenters, who are ſteady to the doctrinal Articles of the Church. What has the Diſſenting Caſe to do with the Methodiſt Clergy? I ſhould ſuppoſe it is to let the World know, or perſuade them, if poſſible, that the Proteſtant Diſſenters have not Teachers of the ſame Doctrinal Sentiments in the Body of Miniſters. It grieves me, that the Glory of being zealous for thoſe Principles, for which our Forefathers gave up their All, is departing from the Miniſters of the Church of England; or from thoſe Churches and Miniſters

* The Caſe of the Diſſenting Miniſters, &c.

Miniſters, who diſſent from the Eſtabliſhment. But that it is ſo, Mr. *Mauduit* confeſſes in the 16th Page of his Pamphlet, in Anſwer to what had been declared in the Houſe of Commons, "But the "Diſſenters, we have been told, are not the ſame "now that they were formerly; for they have "changed their Opinions." In Anſwer to this Remark, that Gentleman ſays, "The Diſſenters "are not changed from their Predeceſſors, more "than the Clergy of the Church of *England*." Here the Fact is granted, but to vindicate ſuch a CHANGE of Sentiment that Gentleman adds, "But "in fact both of them (the Clergy and Diſſenting Miniſters) "by ſtudying the Scriptures more care-"fully, have found Reaſon to alter their Opinions "as to many doctrinal Articles, the Clergy of the "Church of *England* changed firſt, and many of "the Diſſenters have ſince."

Theſe are the Words of Mr. *Mauduit*, which plainly ſhew, that Change of Sentiment, effected, as he ſays, by a more careful Study of the Scriptures, is the Ground of the preſent Application; and as he obſerves that the Clergy of the Church of *England* changed firſt, and many of the Diſſenters followed, ſo upon the ſame Footing, as the Clergy applied to Parliament for Redreſs, the Proteſtant Diſſenters made their Application.

I cannot help, in this Place, remarking the Force of Prejudice diſcoverable in this Writer, who reflects upon the Care of our old Divines, both in the Church of *England*, and amongſt the Diſſenters; whoſe labours teſtify the moſt unwearied Application, joined to the higheſt Exertion of Genius and Learning. It is to be wiſhed, that Mr. *Mauduit*, in his fourth Edition, had left out that Sentence; nay, I apprehend, it was to be expected from him, eſpecially when I conſider the Contents of Dr. *Harris*'s printed Letter, ſent to the *London* Miniſters with the 2d Impreſſion of the 3d Edition of Mr. *Mauduit*'s Pamphlet; The Words I allude to in that Letter are theſe, "It having "been repreſented to Mr. *Mauduit*, that ſome Ex- "preſſions in his Pamphlet were thought to reflect "on the Calviniſtic Sentiments, he, with a Can- "dor worthy Imitation, gave Leave to ſtop the "Publication of the third Edition, 'till thoſe Pages "containing the exceptionable Paſſages were cor- "rected and reprinted. I have now the Pleaſure "of preſenting you with a Copy of this corrected "Edition, &c."

If, Sir, Mr. *Mauduit*'s Candor in this third Edition is worthy Imitation, muſt not his illiberal Treatment of our learned Forefathers in his fourth

Edition

Edition be condemned by every generous Mind?—Why ſhould the obnoxious Sentence I have quoted, be left out in the 2d Impreſſion of the 3d Edition, to pleaſe the Calviniſts, and in the 4th Edition, which has *crept* into the World, the ſame obnoxious Paſſage be retained? Whether ſuch Conduct is conſiſtent with the Integrity of a Chriſtian, or even with the Honor of a Gentleman, I am willing that a MERE STRANGER to the preſent Controverſy, ſhould determine.

I will here ſubjoin the Paſſages as they ſtand in the different Editions.

From the 2d Impreſſion of the 3d Edition.	From the 4th Edition.
Page 4, 5. " From " the Writings of Biſhop " *Taylor*, *Stillingfleet*, *Til-* " *lotſon*, *Burnet*, *Hoadley*, " *Clarke*, and the beſt " Church of *England* Di- " vines, and from the " general Improvement " in all Parts of Know- " ledge, which is natu- " rally made in a Courſe " of	Page 4, 5. " From " the Writings of Biſhop " *Taylor*, *Stillingfleet*, *Til-* " *lotſon*, *Burnet*, *Hoadley*, " *Clarke*, and the beſt " Church of *England* Di- " vines; *from a more ex-* " *act Study of the Holy* " *Scriptures*; and from " the general Improve- " ment in all Parts of " Know-

" of Years, many of the
" Diſſenters, now find
" their Opinions altered
" in ſome of theſe Arti-
" cles, and cannot ſub-
" ſcribe."

" Knowledge, which is
" naturally made in a
" Courſe of Years, ma-
" ny of the Diſſenters
" now find their Opini-
" ons altered in ſome
" of theſe Articles, *which*
" *had not then been ſo*
" *carefully examined*, and
" cannot ſubſcribe."

Page 15, 16. " But
" the Diſſenters, we have
" been told, are not the
" ſame now, that they
" were formerly; for
" they have changed their
" Opinions. The Diſ-
" ſenters are not changed
" from their Predeceſ-
" ſors, more than the
" Clergy of the Church
" of *England* are changed
" from theirs. But in
" Fact, both of them
" thought they found
" Reaſon for altering
" their Opinions as to
" ſome

Page 15, 16. " But
" the Diſſenters, we have
" been told, are not the
" ſame now, that they
" were formerly; for
" they have changed their
" Opinions. The Diſ-
" ſenters are not changed
" from their Predeceſ-
" ſors, more than the
" Church of *England*
" are changed from
" theirs. But in Fact,
" both of them, *by*
" *ſtudying the Scriptures*
" *more carefully*, have
" found Reaſon to alter
" their

"ſome doctrinal Arti-	"their Opinions as to
"cles."	"*many* doctrinal Arti-
	"cles."
Page 18. "Do ei-	Page 18. "Do ei-
"ther of us merit Fine	"ther of us merit Fine
"and Impriſonment for	"and Impriſonment for
"our underſtanding the	"our underſtanding the
"Holy Scriptures dif-	"Holy Scriptures *better*
"ferently from our Fore-	"than our Forefathers?"
"fathers?"	

The Method and Manner of the above Alterations are ſo full of Duplicity and Chicane, that there needs no Comment upon them.

It is but too evident, Sir, that Alteration in Opinion was the Occaſion of the diſſenting Application, from Mr. *Mauduit*'s Attempt to vindicate the Body of Diſſenters from the Charge of Deiſm and Enthuſiaſm, which you know meet together.

In that Vindication he blends Names, and ſo confounds the Reader; and inſtead of ſeparating them, as *Jacob* did his Uncle's Sheep, joins them together as Witneſſes to the Orthodoxy of Diſſenters. In Page 46, he names Dr. *Taylor*, who openly wrote againſt the Atonement, and Dr. *Prieſtley*,

Prieſtley, who glories in oppoſing the Godhead of our Redeemer, with ſome others of the ſame Sentiment, as WITNESSES, "Let theſe ALL teſtify "whether Diſſenters are not capable of ſpeaking "the Words of Truth and Soberneſs." LET THESE ALL TESTIFY! Sir, do you imagine, that the Names of a *Taylor* and a *Prieſtley* would do Honor to the Memory of a *Watts*, or a *Doddridge* AS DIVINES!

Can you conceive, Sir, that it is conſiſtent with the Sentiments of ſome in the Committee, to requeſt the Publication of Mr. *Mauduit*'s Book; or, can it be to the Honor of any one who is not aſhamed to be called a Calviniſt?

I have the Pleaſure to ſay, that I know the Publication of it was not by the Requeſt of, nor agreeable to, the Pleaſure of all; although the World has not known, but that it was publiſhed by the Requeſt of the WHOLE Committee. Surely, Sir, the Publick are entitled to know in what Senſe, that Edition of Mr. *Mauduit*'s Pamphlet was publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Committee; or, at leaſt the Edition, above referred to, ſhould have been called in FOR THE CREDIT OF ALL; inſtead of which, I know that in *September* laſt, it was to be ſold at the *Royal Exchange*. It is to be hoped, that the

the Queries propoſed by the Author of the Remarks on the POSTSCRIPT to Mr. *Iſrael Mauduit*'s Caſe,† reſpecting this Matter, will be ingenuouſly anſwered; or elſe the Title-Page remains an Impoſition on the World, and a Diſgrace to the Publication.

As a further Support of my Aſſertion, that THIS APPLICATION ORIGINATED WITH SENTIMENT, permit me to obſerve that almoſt immediately upon the Miſcarriage of the Diſſenting Bill in the Houſe of Lords, a flaming Diſcourſe, burſting from the Heart of one angry at Diſappointment, was publiſhed. In which Diſcourſe the Author, endeavouring to ſupport by Argument, the Rights of private Judgment, takes the Liberty to fall upon his Brethren who are attached to the Calviniſtical Doctrines of the Church of *England*. To be ſilent in this Caſe is impious.* For, thoſe who will perſecute Chriſt by wounding the Truth, are not far from the Temper of perſecuting his Diſciples. How cruel is this Gentleman, this profeſſed Lover

† See a Pamphlet with that Title printed for *S. Bladon*, in *Paternoſter-row*.

* The late Rev. Mr. *Thomas Bradbury*, in one of his Diſcourſes upon 1 *Peter* iii. 15. with an immediate Alluſion to thoſe who ſuffered in the Cauſe of Truth, thus expreſſes himſelf; "They did not ſuffer as Mutes; they had no negative "Martyrs among them, Perſons that died for ſaying nothing. "'Twas the Word of their Teſtimony for which they were "killed, and by which they overcame.

of Liberty, to misrepresent the Sentiments of the true Calvinists; and to dress Calvinism itself in such a dreadful Garb, as even to make it appear a Child begot in Hell, and brought forth by Sin itself; yea the vilest of the snakey Train!—Had Satan sat as a masked Figure of Truth, and Beelzebub guided Mr. *Radcliff*'s Pencil, he could not have executed a more false Representation of the Doctrines of *Calvin*.—As a Specimen take the following Passage of that Gentleman's Sermon,

"If to believe that the Supreme Judge of the "Earth punishes without Guilt, rewards without "Virtue, and is governed by arbitrary Caprice, be "a Preparation for preaching the Gospel of Truth; "then Fraud, Injustice, and Perfidy are the best "Characteristics of social Creatures. If there are "any Doctrines that ought not to be tolerated, "they are such as these, which undermine the "blessed Character of the Deity; which strike at "the Root of all Morality and Religion; which "counteract the Force of the best Laws, and make "Men uncharitable, malevolent and persecuting; "in order more effectually to recommend them "to the Approbation of Heaven."†

While

† "It is easy to see, that that inflammatory Preacher, Mr. "*Radcliff*, intends the Calvinists and Orthodox; and surely a "Man

While I peruſe the above groſs Miſrepreſentation, I ſee (and ſhudder at the Sight) the Spirit of the infernal Inquiſition riſing before me, encompaſſed with all the horrible Attendants of that ſanguinary Monſter.

But what, Sir, confirms my Opinion which I am laying before you, is the Approbation publickly expreſſed by Dr. *Kippis*, of Mr. *Radcliff*'s Declamation: He repreſents that Gentleman as provoked "to throw out in a Sermon, dictated by Genius and "Spirit, the Language OF MANLY INDIGNATION, "that is the Reſult of Liberty's being refuſed, not of "it's being enlarged." Page 73. Why ſhould Mr. *Radcliff*'s Diſappointment, provoke that learned Gentleman to pour out his Reſentment againſt *John Calvin* and his Adherents, and abuſe his Sentiments of Religion, as fooliſhly, and with as much Meanneſs, as the Council at *Conſtance* treated the Memory

"Man who would wiſh there were not a Calviniſt in the World, "would make little ſcruple of eradicating them; eſpecially, as "he inſinuates, after giving a moſt unfair and iniquitous Gloſs "upon their Doctrines, that they ought not to be tolerated. A "ſtrange Reflection, indeed, upon the Formula of the Church of "*England*, which is confeſſedly Calviniſm. From the Power of "ſuch Pretenders to ſuperior Reaſon, as Mr. *Radcliff*, may God "and the *Britiſh* Government, ever defend the orthodox Diſ-"ſenters!"— CANDID THOUGHTS, &c. Page 18. A Piece printed for *W. Goldſmith, Paternoſter-Row*,

Memory of *John Wickliff*, by ordering his Bones to be dug up, if they could be diſtinguiſhed, and thrown out of holy Ground?

I am truly ſorry to obſerve ſuch furious Diſpleaſure againſt the Legiſlature, and ſuch an impetuous Torrent of wrathful Words, ſtiled, THE LANGUAGE OF MANLY INDIGNATION DICTATED BY GENIUS AND SPIRIT.

But it is remarkable, that whilſt the ſtrongeſt Reſentment glows againſt ſuch as conſcientiouſly oppoſed the Bill that miſcarried, or thoſe who were Neuters in that Matter, the ſofteſt Language is uſed, when the harſheſt Sentences againſt Truth are publiſhed to the World. All the Remark Dr. *Stennett* makes upon the horrible Tenets with which the Preſs has lately groaned, is this, "True, "thoſe Doctrines have of late been oppoſed with "a Warmth as indecent in the Opinion of many, "as it has been imprudent." † Harſh and abuſive Language, is beyond all Doubt, unworthy of the Spirit of the Goſpel of Jeſus—furious Conduct in oppoſing the Enemies of it, is not likely to ſucceed: Beelzebub is not to be caſt out by Beelzebub. But certainly there is a Chriſtian Reſentment to be ſhewed againſt the open and ſecret Oppoſition made to the Honors of our Saviour, and the

† See his free and diſpaſſionate Account, &c. Page 50.

the Blaſphemy of Infidel Pens. *Eli* felt for the Prophanity of his Sons, he knew their INDECENCY AND IMPRUDENCE, but his Indolence and Neglect of Duty, were accompanied with the moſt tremendous Circumſtances.

I own, Sir, the Fury of ſome againſt the Doctrines of Scripture, avowed in the Articles of the Church of *England*, and the tame Indifference of others, concerning them, on this Occaſion, are to me no good Signs; and this Conduct confirms me more and more that Sentiment was the Ground of the late Application.

It is to be remarked, that Dr. *Kippis* takes peculiar Care, before he comes upon the Caſe reſpecting his Diſſenting Brethren, to trouble himſelf with the Petition of the Clergy, in which he diſcovers the true Spirit of Perſecution, bitterly ſpeaking againſt a People that never injured the Doctor—I mean the Methodiſts. Surely, as CHURCHMEN, it is no Reproach to them, that they believe the Doctrines of the Church to which they belong, which the Doctor owns to be Calviniſtic. That Gentleman labours to ſhew the Inconſiſtency of thoſe of the Clergy who are *Arminians* in Principle, and yet are zealous for Subſcription: This I have no Buſineſs with. But the Inference he makes, carries with

with it an unkind Inſinuation (not unlike that of Mr. *Mauduit*, above referred to) viz. " So long as " that Infatuation ſubſiſts, and Subſcription in its " preſent Form maintains its Ground, the Me- " thodiſts muſt increaſe." Page 6. Suppoſing they do, why ſhould the Doctor be uneaſy or alarmed? Is this Expreſſion conſiſtent with univerſal Benevolence? I think not. Nay, is it quite conſiſtent with the Words with which that Gentleman attempts to obviate a Difficulty, a reverend Brother ſtarted in the general Body, reſpecting thoſe Perſons who favoured the Methodiſts, and were not regularly admitted, yet deſired to qualify under the Character of Diſſenting Miniſters; that Brother apprehending the Bill would be converted to their Prejudice? The only Anſwer is, " An APPREHENSION which to me appears not to have " the leaſt Foundation." Page 77. By the Way, this is no Proof. But the Doctor thinks " If Sub- " ſcription in its preſent Form maintains its " Ground, the Methodiſts muſt increaſe." So certainly the Mode of Subſcription is calculated to prevent this Increaſe, and yet he thinks there is no Foundation for his reverend Brothers painful Apprehenſions!

Further Reaſons, Sir, why I am confident this Application originated in Sentiment, are, the ſevere

ſevere Paragraphs publiſhed, in Conſequence of the Denial of the Relief, in a Pamphlet wrote by THE DISSENTING GENTLEMAN who ſtiles himſelf a Lover of Truth and Peace.* The Freedom that Gentleman has taken with the Church of *England* diſcovers an unhappy Spirit that does not, by any Means, comport with the Beginning of his Title-Page, viz. "a CALM Anſwer to the Enquiry, Why "are you a Diſſenter from the Church of *England?*" Certainly every one ought to give the Reaſon of his Hope with Meekneſs, and ſo with the ſame Meekneſs the Reaſon of his differing from a national Eſtabliſhment ſhould be given. ‖ And ſuch is the Lenity of our Government that any Perſon without Danger of Trouble, may write his Sentiments with the ſame Freedom as though the Toleration was unlimited. How great the Pity that ſuch an Enjoyment ſhould be abuſed! Why ſhould that Diſſenting Gentleman, Maſter of good Senſe, and profeſſing a peculiar Degree of Calmneſs and Candour, uſe Expreſſions that are evidently ſtudied to inflame the Minds of thoſe in Power, from whom he diſſents? Cool Argument is

* See a calm and plain Anſwer, &c. printed for *J. Buckland, Paternoſter-row.* Page 23.

‖" 'Tis ſcandalous to all the Laws of Battle to impoſe Silence "upon them that know the Truth, in Protection to the Cla- "mours of thoſe that deny it." *Bradbury*, Vol. Sermons, before quoted, Page 323.

is the moſt rational Mean to convince thoſe ſenſible Perſons, from whom we cannot avoid differing. Inſtead of this, the diſſenting Gentleman, in his Obſervations upon the Denial of the COMMITTEE'S PRAYER, by the Houſe of Lords, breaks forth with Indignation againſt the Church of *England*, and inſults her Doctrinal Principles with a Rancour ſhocking to be reflected on, joined with a horrid Miſrepreſentation of ſome of the ſcriptural Tenets, which are the Ornament of Proteſtants. Why ſhould one of the moſt ſenſible Gentlemen among the RATIONAL Diſſenters, treat the Church of *England* with ſuch paſſionate Language (perhaps ſome might call it "manly Indignation") at a Time when we feel not the Weight of eccleſiaſtical Authority, ſupported by the civil Sword?

Sir, I ſhall not trouble you with long Quotations from this Writer. But as the ſame *Shibboleth* is uſed by him, as by our modern Diſſenters, namely, "that it is a liberal and enlightened Age," I would only deſire you to remark the bold Reflection caſt upon the Doctrines you and I have ſubſcribed, and that I hope we ſhall live and die upon, viz; that they are "dark, unſcriptural, "diſputable Articles." Page 23.

Now

Now, Sir, I appeal to your Candor, ſound Judgment, and real Experience of divine Things, whether I have not the moſt ſubſtantial Reaſons for my objecting to an Application to Parliament for Relief in point of Subſcription, inaſmuch as the Authors I have quoted, combine to prove that the very Deſign did originate with doctrinal Principles. Therefore, I humbly apprehend, that Dr. *Stennett* is greatly miſtaken, when he declares, Page 31, "That it is a Queſtion not of Princi-"ples, but Liberty."

Give me Leave, Sir, here to vindicate myſelf to you from the common Charge brought againſt thoſe who oppoſed the late Application to Parliament, among whom I was one. The Charge is that of being guilty of a Spirit of Intollerance, a Diſpoſition to perſecute thoſe who differ from us; and that the Oppoſition to the late Application, neceſſarily breathed this infernal Temper. I think, Sir, I have expreſſed the Cenſure I am under from my benevolent Brethren, with as much Force, as their Mildneſs would have enabled them to have done.

Perſecution I abhor, AB IMO PECTORE; the Principles which I eſpouſe, lead me to ſhew com-

 paſſion,

paſſion, and not to perſecute. I never imagined that broiling a Man on a Gridiron would convince his Judgment; or that Tortures of pretended holy Men are calculated to enlighten the Underſtanding, any more than, among Diſſenting Miniſters, ſevere Cenſures, violent Reflections, or unkind Behaviour to thoſe who differ from them in Opinion, are likely Means to prove their Opponents to be wrong, or to promote Harmony and Good-Will in Society. But while my Mind trembles at Intolerance, I had rather continue under Cenſure, than join a Prayer to the Legiſlature for Toleration in preaching, praying, and printing againſt the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, or the Atonement of our Saviour. I had rather continue under Cenſure, than join in a Prayer to encourage ſuch Tenets as Dr. *Prieſtley* has publiſhed in his penny and twopenny Pamphlets; which are circulated to draw the Minds of Thouſands in our Nation from the common Faith.—I would not have a Socinian perſecuted for denying the Deity and Atonement of Chriſt, any more than I would a Jew for blaſpheming my Meſſiah, or denying that the true Meſſiah is yet come; Tenets, in my Opinion, equally dangerous to Chriſtianity; nor would I dare to uſe one Mean to prevent their obtaining Liberty to worſhip their own God in their own

Way.

Way.— Let ſuch aſk Liberty, but not with my Name.

Sir, were I to join in ſuch an Application I muſt eventually declare that I approve of the Poſition which the Diſſenting Gentleman has laid down, juſt now quoted, viz. that the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England are "dark, "unſcriptural, diſputable." This I cannot do; and becauſe I cannot, I am cenſured as intolerant. Surely, Sir, a Diſciple of the meek Jeſus ought to refuſe joining in a Prayer to Government, with thoſe who earneſtly beg that, which he, as a Diſciple, thinks will diſhonour the Perſon of Chriſt; and which, in his Opinion, ſaps the Foundation of the Mediator's Kingdom. Indeed, how can a Miniſter, who holds theſe Doctrines, if his Conſcience is awake, earneſtly petition that an open Oppoſition to the Doctrines of the Redeemer and his Apoſtles, may have the Sanction of the Legiſlature?

While I am perſuaded that I ought not to join in a Prayer, which from my Heart I cannot put up to Government, but to oppoſe what I conceive has a dangerous Tendency, with Reſpect to the common Cauſe of Chriſtianity, I muſt be free from the Charge of Intollerance; eſpecially as I feel no Ob-

jection in my Mind to thoſe Miniſters addreſſing the Parliament for Relief, in their own Names, who look upon the Doctrines held by the Church of England as oppoſite to Scripture.

My other Objections will appear, Sir, while I lay before you, the View I have of THE METHOD IN WHICH THE LATE APPLICATION TO PARLIAMENT WAS CONDUCTED.

As to the particular Circumſtances attending the various Meetings, I refer you to the Pamphlet already mentioned, intitled "*Remarks on* Mr. "*Mauduit's Poſtſcript to the Caſe of the Diſſenting Mini-*"*ſters*, &c.— A Pamphlet yet unanſwered!

With all Deference to the Judgment of my Superiors, and without any Diſreſpect to the learned Gentlemen who compoſed the Committee, I muſt ſay, that I heartily diſapprove of the whole Affair for various Reaſons. The Suddenneſs of the Propoſal to make Application to Parliament, is one Reaſon.--An Affair ſo important to ourſelves and to Poſterity, ſhould have been coolly propoſed to Individuals, previous to the general Meeting of the Miniſters. The Matter required much Deliberation and Attention in private, before any Gentleman could form a proper Sentiment, and be ready to

ſpeak

ſpeak pertinently upon the Occaſion in publick. But the Caſe was quite different.†

Another Reaſon is, the Rapidity with which the Buſineſs was carried on, together with the Narrowneſs of Spirit, diſcovered in the Management of it.

The Rapidity was notorious at the firſt general Meeting. The Chairman was choſen, Reſolutions made in a very ſhort Space of Time, and the Committee appointed with ſuch Speed, that many there were at a Stand what to ſay or how to determine. One of the Body then convened, did, according to Mr. *Mauduit*'s Account, actually oppoſe. But if that Gentleman was the ſingle Oppoſer, he would not have been ſo, had not a neceſſary Engagement made me too late; for, to my great Concern, upon my Arrival, the Buſineſs was over. Surely, Sir, as the Notice was ſo ſhort, a reaſonable Space of Time ſhould have been allowed for Gentlemen that could not be there to the MOMENT FIXED. Had one Half Hour been granted for that Purpoſe, I ſhould not have been abſent.

But, Sir, as Poſterity are concerned in this grand Affair, would it not have been more prudent, more

† See Page 8 and following of the aforeſaid Pamphlet.

more decent, more equitable, that at this Meeting, nothing more ſhould have been the Buſineſs of the Evening, than a diſpaſſionate Conference, and an Adjournment to ſome Time, when all, or moſt of thoſe who had a Right to be preſent, might have had an Opportunity of ſhewing their Opinion?

The Narrowneſs of Spirit with which the Buſineſs was managed, muſt appear to every conſiderate Mind, in that it was conducted by ſo ſmall a Part of the diſſenting Body.

The Advice, as well as Sentiments of all the Diſſenting Miniſters, in the Counties of England and Wales, ſhould have been aſked; who are as much concerned in this Affair, as the London Miniſters: I ſay ALL the Diſſenting Miniſters, and not a few of every County; for this would have been a Deception put upon Government.

A further Reaſon, reverend Sir, of my Diſapprobation, is the Hurry with which the Prayer was carried into the Houſe of Commons. I conceive, Sir, that the Buſineſs of a Committee, who are only Part of a Body, is to digeſt the Affairs committed to their Conſideration, and then to lay before the Body what they have prepared for their mature Determination. But inſtead of this,

this, the Prayer was carried into the Houſe of Commons, and we were ENTIRELY IGNORANT OF ITS CONTENTS.

Surely every Man, every RATIONAL DISSENTER, ought to ſay his own Prayer, otherwiſe Government is mocked: But the Committee carried a Petition in my Name, not knowing whether I could ſay Amen to it, or not.

I have heard, that if the Petition, in its preſent Form, had been laid before the general Body, it would not have been approved; indeed, ſo much was expreſsly declared by ONE OF THE COMMITTEE! I am ſure, that if a Diſſenter is tolerated by GOVERNMENT, to pray without a Form in public Worſhip, and to pray in his own Way, the COMMITTEE ought to have acquainted the whole Body with the Matter of the Petition, they thought moſt proper to be preſented on the general Behalf.

I believe this Conduct is not to be juſtified by any reflecting Mind, and even the Diſſenting Gentleman's Favourites, among the Heathens, *Socrates*, and *Cato*†, would not have approved of ſuch a Proceeding.

An

† See A CALM ANSWER, &c. Page 9.

An additional Reaſon, Sir, of my Diſapprobation, is the very NATURE OF THE PETITION.

In the firſt Place, the Petition ſubſtitutes one human TEST in the Room of another. Why has one Sett of Gentlemen, NOT IN POWER, a Right to impoſe ſuch a Teſt more than thoſe who compoſe the Legiſlature? And is it not a Fact, that there are thoſe among the Diſſenting Miniſters in England, who cannot ſubſcribe ſome Parts of the preſent Tranſlation, with Reſpect to the Letter of it, viz. ſuch Paſſages as *John* i. 1. 1 *Timothy*, iii. 16. *Philip.* ii. 6?

If this is a Fact, many muſt be denied the Privilege of Toleration, becauſe they cannot, for Conſcience Sake, ſubſcribe the Letter of the new Teſt. If they do, they muſt put their Hands to that, which in their Judgment, they do not believe; unleſs that Expreſſion in the new Form, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT, be conſidered as having no Meaning.— In which Caſe they might as well ſign a Blank.

The new-invented Teſt appears dangerous for two Reaſons: The one is, it will have a Tendency in my Opinion, to make Men trifle with the Scriptures;

tures; the other is, it will be the Mean of confirming the Infidel in his Oppoſition to Truth.

The Conſideration of a Number of Miniſters, Paſtors, Teachers, Elders, Spiritual Guides, ſigning the Scriptures, who are not agreed in what are really canonical, will cauſe the Deiſt to ſmile at the Folly of Learned and Unlearned, and to ſay, they have their Bible yet to ſeek.

The Obſervation, Sir, of a large Number of Men ſubſcribing the Books that are called the Scriptures, as a Rule of Faith and Practice, who differ as wide as the four Points of the Compaſs, with Reſpect to Sentiment, muſt give them a Pleaſure, who, in the Rejection of the Bible, have already wickedly made a Handle of the Difference as to doctrinal Opinions among Chriſtians.

But when the Books which we hold as canonical, are ſpecified, and a Number of Perſons cordially agree in ſuch Articles of Doctrine, as they think are contained in thoſe Books; though the Enemy may hate our Opinions, he muſt admire our Harmony in ſigning what we conſider as fundamental Sentiments.

For theſe Reaſons, dear Sir, I do diſapprove of the Prayer, becauſe it would involve us in greater Difficulties than can be ſuppoſed NOW TO EXIST; ſince this is not declaring what I am to receive as the Bible, the Book by way of Diſtinction from all other Writings, as my ONLY Rule of Faith and Practice. So that a large Field is opened for the Chriſtian Deiſt. Had this Teſt been expreſſed in the Words of thoſe eminent Men, whoſe Names, like Lamps by Day-Light, burn dimly in our enlightened Age, I mean THE ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES, who, by Authority of Parliament, humbly offered their Advice concerning a Confeſſion of Faith, the Teſt would not have been ſo diſagreeable or unmeaning, as it ſtands in its preſent Form.* The Aſſembly's Words I take the Liberty of quoting. "Under the Name of Holy Scripture, or the "Word of God written, are now contained all the "Books of the Old and New Teſtament which "are theſe, &c. † all which are given by the In-"ſpiration of God, to be the Rule of Faith and "Life."

How

* "*I.* A. B. declare, as in the Preſence of Almighty God, "that I believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New "Teſtament, contain a Revelation of the Mind and Will of "God, and that I receive them as the Rule of my Faith and "Practice."

† See Page 3 of the Aſſembly's Confeſſion.

How different from the Mode of the new-invented Teſt, which, without Difficulty will even admit ENLIGHTENED Freethinkers!

I have no Reaſon to recede from the 6th Article of the Church of *England*.

Article VI. "*Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scrip-*
"*tures for Salvation.*

"Holy Scripture containeth all Things ne-
"ceſſary to Salvation: ſo that whatſoever is not
"read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not
"to be required of any Man, that it ſhould be be-
"lieved as an Article of the Faith, or be thought
"requiſite, or neceſſary to Salvation. In the Name
"of the Holy Scripture, we do underſtand theſe
"canonical Books of the Old and New Teſtament,
"of whoſe Authority there never was any Doubt in
"the Church."

And why did not our Committee think of forming their Teſt according to this Article? Then thoſe who were to ſubſcribe, would have known clearly what they were to ſet their Hands to: And I cannot ſee any Reaſon why that Article, as a Teſt, ſhould be ſet aſide, except that it was one of the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, and therefore it muſt be of no Value.

Indeed,

Indeed, Sir, I am ſorry that ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes, ſhould be of ſo little Conſequence: Perhaps the riſing Sun of human Reaſon, has diſpelled that Miſt of our old Divines, in the Eſteem of modern Scepticks; but the Truth they bore Teſtimony to, will flouriſh when Time ſhall be no more. I do not ſee why a Papiſt may not ſubſcribe the preſent Teſt, as he maintains that the Scriptures contain the Mind and Will of God, as a Rule of Faith and Practice: But he cannot ſubſcribe the Scriptures as the ONLY Rule; he muſt have Traditions, and Fables of Men.

Why could not a *Mohammedan* ſubſcribe? He believes *Moſes* to have been a Prophet, and Chriſt to have been a greater: But then, ſays the Eaſtern Antichriſtian, though I believe the Mind and Will of God are the Rule of Faith and Practice, I have that which will exceed thoſe Books, even the KORAN; for my Prophet was ſuperior to them both.

Another Reaſon, Sir, why I diſapprove of the new Teſt is, that it muſt be equally ſevere againſt thoſe who cannot ſubſcribe it, in its preciſe Form, as the old Teſt, inaſmuch as the penal Laws are not repealed. And why may I not be as well dragged to Priſon, ſeverely fined, and inhumanly treated, for not ſubſcribing the thirty-five doc-

trinal

trinal Articles of the Church, as for not ſubſcribing the new Teſt preſented to the Legiſlature, by the Committee?

A Declaration was made among the Miniſters, that all could not conſcientiouſly ſign the modern Teſt, and the Managers of the late Application, might reaſonably expect that there would be thoſe of the diſſenting Body, who would remain under the Hardſhips complained of by the Authors, who have appeared ſo violently in Behalf of the Petition. —Is not this INTOLERANCE?

The Prayer in one View aſks too much, viz. That Diſſenting Miniſters may tell the Magiſtrate, who are proper Perſons to be qualified. This, if granted, might in Courſe of Time, prove very dangerous: And thoſe Gentlemen who take the Liberty to reflect upon Epiſcopal Authority, perhaps if they had the Reins of Government in their Hands, would with SOLOMON's SON, who, in his own Eſteem, was more enlightened than his Father, uſe Scorpions inſtead of Whips, and double the diſſenting Yoke.

I think alſo in another Point of View, the Prayer is not ſufficiently catholic, as it only begs for a Grant of a Teſt that many cannot, or will not take; Why ſhould it not have been for the Abolition of all penal Laws at once? For my worthy Brethren

who

who ſcruple the ſubſcribing a few of the doctrinal Articles, are no more injured by the preſent Mode of Subſcription, than thoſe muſt have been, who cannot ſubſcribe any human Teſt, if the preſent Prayer had been granted by the Legiſlature.

I muſt now take the Liberty to obſerve, Sir, that the conducting of this Affair has not been attended with the moſt promiſing Circumſtances. The unhappy Warmth of ſome, and the Coldneſs and Neutrality of others, * I own occaſioned me to think that it was not of God, who is a God of Order; and that Proſperity would not attend ſuch Diſſipation; a Diſſipation, which ſome, through an amazing Partiality to themſelves, have ventured to ſtile the greateſt Unanimity.

Beſides, Sir, the Unſuitableneſs of the Time, at which it was made, was, and ſtill is, with me no ſmall Objection; a Time, when the clerical Petition was rejected; for it could not be ſuppoſed that the Eſtabliſhed Church would deny the Petition of her

* Thoſe of my worthy Brethren who thought it beſt to be neuter, ſufficiently fall under the Cenſure of the candid Doctor *Stennett*, Page 39, 40, "I am ſometimes ready to perſuade "myſelf, that the Neutrality of the few Perſons I have in my "Eye, could not be owing to Conſiderations of Con-"SCIENCE."

her own Sons, and almoſt immediately after, anſwer the ſame Kind of Prayer made by the Miniſters, diſſenting from her Communion.

Dr. *Kippis*, rivets this Opinion in my Mind, by aſſerting, "That its originating with Perſons of no "Rank in the Church, muſt have been hurtful to "it in the higheſt Degree. In fact, it was ſo "far from originating with, that it was oppoſed "by the dignified Clergy; and particularly by "almoſt the whole Bench of Biſhops, who, by "their Characters and Station, are expected to take "the lead, in what immediately relates to eccleſi-"aſtical Matters." Page 9.

If, according to the ſame Author, their Lordſhips were afraid that an Attack ſhould be made upon the Church by the Clergy's Petition, who were within her Pale, how much more muſt they be alarmed at an Application from thoſe without her Pale, immediately following THEIR Example!

This I urge from what Dr. *Kippis* ſays, "Sub-"ſcription to ſome Teſt they might conſider as a "Fence abſolutely neceſſary to the Exiſtence and "Security of religious Eſtabliſhments; or ſo im-"portant at leaſt, that it could not be wholly re-"moved without Danger." Page 10.

If

If this is a Fact, it is certainly no Wonder that the Diſſenters Prayer was rejected in the Houſe of Lords.

Sir, we are to conſider the Conſtitution of the Nation in this Buſineſs. Government acts upon its conſtitutional Plan, whether I am paid for ſubſcribing a certain Syſtem of Worſhip, or whether I am without her Emoluments: Therefore, at ſuch a Time, when the Eſtabliſhed Church felt an Attack from within, upon her Articles, ſhe muſt be diſpleaſed at the tolerated Diſſenters, begging Relief with Reſpect to the ſigning thoſe Articles, and ſubſtituting another very exceptionable Teſt of their own Invention.

However reaſonable in its own Nature, the Favour which was aſked, might be eſteemed, I contend that it was an unreaſonable Time to ſolicit it; eſpecially as Dr. *Kippis* confeſſes, "Though it be "a known Fact, that many of the Diſſenting "Clergy have not ſubmitted, and cannot ſubmit "to the Subſcription required of them by Law, "they have been allowed to go on quietly in their "religious Employments; and the Experience of "half a Century hath proved, that the Lenity "ſhewn to them, has been of no Prejudice to the "Commu-

" Community." Page 42, 43. The Doctor has aſſerted Truth. Therefore, Sir, I think as the Government and the Diſſenters were upon ſuch happy Terms, the Application was not well timed.

But in another Part of his Vindication, he endeavours to raiſe a Fear, in the Breaſts of Diſſenters, of the Poſſibility, if not the Probability, " that " other Men and other Times may ſucceed to " thoſe we have the Happineſs of now behold- " ing." Page 45.

If this was to be the Caſe, (which God of his infinite Mercy forbid!) the ſame Change in Government would eaſily abrogate the moſt happy Laws which had been enacted in Favour of the Diſſenters. But ſurely, no ſuch Revolution was ſo near its awful Approach in the Apprehenſions of any, as to make it neceſſary that the Application of the Diſſenters, ſhould commence at the very Time the Houſe of Commons had refuſed the Requeſt of the eſtabliſhed Clergy.

And I humbly conceive it to be of no ſmall Weight in the preſent Argument, that the Gentlemen who had the Lead in this great Buſineſs, went not upon true, but flattering Grounds; which Re-

mark, the Event proves to be juſt. The Bill, it is true, paſſed the Houſe of Commons by a large Majority; but how ſmall a Number of Members compoſed the Aſſembly, when the Bill was admitted!—In the Houſe of Lords it met with a moſt unfavourable Reception upon the ſecond Reading. Had no Biſhop or temporal Peer preſent voted againſt it, the Proxies ALONE would have been ſufficient to prevent the Commitment of the Bill.‡ Compare, Sir, theſe Circumſtances together, and it will evidently appear, that it was, indeed, upon FLATTERING GROUNDS, that the Committee raiſed the Babel of their Expectations. So great a Majority in that auguſt Houſe, ſufficiently expreſſes how far the Government was diſpoſed to favour the Cauſe.

I think Dr. *Kippis*'s own Words ſufficiently prove my Aſſertion,

" We BELIEVED that Adminiſtration could have " no Objection to a Requeſt, that was moſt equi- " table in itſelf, and which might have been " granted without the Shadow of Injury, Danger, " or Diſturbance to the Publick. With Regard to

‡ Was it ever known, that ſo great a Number of Peers voted by Proxy, on any Queſtion that ever came before them?

" to the Members of both Houſes of Parliament,
" we truſted that their Wiſdom and Moderation
" would diſpoſe them to reſcue the Statute Book
" from penal Acts, which are a Diſgrace to it, and
" to give Relief to a peaceable Body of Men, who
" did not deſerve to be marked out by the Laws
" as Criminals, hateful to the State. As to the
" Biſhops in particular, we had been taught to ex-
" pect every Thing from the mild and candid Spirit
" of the preſent Bench. We knew that the Senti-
" ments of all Ranks of Men were, for the moſt
" Part, averſe to Reſtraint and Severity in Matters
" of Religion; and we were not ignorant that
" Toleration had lately lifted up her Voice ſo
" loudly in Europe, as to be heard and attended
" to, even in arbitrary and Popiſh Governments.
" Encouraged by ſuch a Number of FLATTERING
" APPEARANCES, we ventured, with all Humility
" and Reſpect, to lay our Caſe before the Legiſla-
" ture, and to ſolicit an Enlargement of the Tole-
" ration Act." Page 46, 47.

Though ſuch a Variety of Appearances encouraged the Committee to venture upon what they did, yet the Doctor himſelf is obliged to ſtile them FLATTERING.

I own

I own it is a great Thing to bear Diſappointment; and that it is more wounding in Proportion to the Greatneſs of the Expectations wherewith we have been FLATTERED. But yet Diſappointment, however ſevere, ought not ſo to diſconcert the Miniſters of Chriſt, as to cauſe bitter and malignant Expreſſions to flow from their Pens. Nay, it is forbidden by every Maxim of good Policy to reflect upon, much more to reproach the Legiſlature, for rejecting a Bill, the Merits of which were not wholly clear to Government. Certainly it muſt be an Act of the higheſt IMPRUDENCE to affront thoſe who have it in their Power to grant the Favour for which they ſo earneſtly prayed; more eſpecially, when the ſame Petition as to Matter and Form, is intended to be again offered to the next Seſſion of Parliament, and every vigorous Preparation is making, by thoſe Gentlemen, who compoſed the late Committee, to forward the Deſign.

We generally ſay, that it is beſt to behave well to the meaneſt Perſon, becauſe we know not, in the Courſe of Life, to whoſe Friendſhip we ſhall be indebted. If ſo, then it is moſt clearly our Duty to pay the utmoſt Reſpect to thoſe who are immediately in Power, whilſt we maintain a ſound Conſcience, which cannot poſſibly forbid the exerciſing

ciſing Decency and good Manners towards our Superiors.

How far Dr. *Kippis* is of this Opinion, I leave you, Sir, and the Publick to judge from the following Paſſage:

"On the one Side (referring to thoſe noble Peers who divided for the Commitment of the Bill) "were Truth, Reaſon, Eloquence, Juſtice, "and Religion." Page 49. I would here aſk, Whether by this Mode of Expreſſion, the Author does not mean to inſinuate that Truth, Reaſon, Eloquence, Juſtice, and Religion, were not to be found with the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, who divided againſt the Bill? Perhaps the Sentence which immediately follows, may in ſome Meaſure reſolve the Doubt.—"On the one Side "were Truth, Reaſon, Eloquence, Juſtice, and "Religion: On the other – PUDET HÆC OPPRO-"BRIA DICI POTUISSE, moſt of the Temporal "Peers, and all the Biſhops."

The Doctor doubtleſs intended, to expreſs much in a little, in order to ſhew the greater Contempt; ‖ but

‖ "How partial are Mankind to their own Opinions, and "their own Party! How ready to abuſe their Adverſaries, "and

but not ſatisfied with the Severity and Boldneſs of the above Reflections, the Doctor's "MANLY IN-"DIGNATION" in the following Paſſage, ſwells with ſuch foaming Billows, as even to daſh, with impotent Rage, againſt the higheſt Seat in Government;— "Did they not (referring to the Biſhops) "go FARTHER? Was there no Influ-"ence reaching upwards to the very SUMMIT OF "POWER, and then deſcending with great Force "againſt us?" Page 94.

The Subject is too delicate to enlarge upon; I ſhall therefore leave it with this Obſervation, that the Inſinuation is as cruel as unjuſt, and as dangerous as cruel; the manifeſt Tendency being to introduce ſuch Thoughts into the Minds of loyal Subjects, as ſhould ever be excluded.

But we ſhall leſs wonder at ſuch Language, if we reflect that at this Day, Liberty is moſt notoriouſly turned into Wantonneſs. Thus the Denial in the Houſe of Lords, is ſtiled "an OBSTINATE "REFUSAL" in the following Sentence, "I am "perſuaded, that ſeveral of my Brethren will deli-

"ver

"and FLATTER their Friends! The former, in their Eſtima-"tion, are Knaves or Blockheads; the latter, Men of Reaſon, "Eloquence, Juſtice, and Religion." CRITICAL REVIEW, for *Auguſt*, on Dr. KIPPIS's Vindication.

" ver their Sentiments the more freely in Conſe-
" quence of the OBSTINATE REFUSAL which has
" been given to their juſt and reaſonable Requeſt;
" whereas otherwiſe they might have been induced
" to hold their Peace by the Dictates of Gratitude,
" and the Obligations of Civility and good Man-
" ners." Page 71. The Doctor ſeems, in this Place, to intimate, that Ill Manners and Incivility are ſometimes juſtifiable. And the following Paſſage ſupports my Conſtruction of the laſt quoted Expreſſions, " The Lenity of the Governors of
" the Church might have ſoothed us to Repoſe;
" but we will not be AWE-STRUCK by their Seve-
" rity. If the Clergy imagine they can affright us
" from an open Exhibition of our Opinions on
" every Subject of Religion; and on every Queſtion,
" in which the Rights of Conſcience are concerned,
" by the vain Terrors of penal Laws, let them be
" aſſured, that they are totally unacquainted with
" our Characters." Page 71.

Theſe Expreſſions, Sir, do not breathe the Language of Meekneſs, but of Defiance. Is it not better to court the Lenity of Government, than to rouze its Reſentment; and thankfully acknowledge Favours at preſent enjoyed, even while we aſk for more?

Before

Before I conclude, I muſt obſerve, that Dr. *Kippis*'s Advertiſement, by no Means alarms me.—"With Regard to the very ſmall Number of Miniſters, who were unfriendly to their Brethren in the late Affair, and endeavoured to obſtruct the ſolicited Relief, let me be permitted to give them a Hint for the Regulation of their future Conduct. It behoves them to take Care, that they do not inadvertently injure themſelves. The Time is probably approaching, when the Thirty-Nine Articles will be reviſed and altered. A Scheme of this Kind is in Agitation among the Governors of the Church; and ſhould it be carried into Execution, there can be little Doubt, but that ſtrict Calviniſm will be excluded, and an Arminian Turn be given to the eſtabliſhed Doctrines. In that Caſe, a Number of Diſſenting Miniſters, who are zealous Calviniſts, may labour under ſimilar Difficulties with thoſe who now object to particular Parts of the preſent Articles. They may be obliged by Law, to ſubſcribe Opinions, which they apprehend to be contrary to the Truth of the Goſpel; and, in order to obtain Relief, may wiſh for the Aſſiſtance of their Brethren, who are in different Sentiments. Nor need they be afraid of Retaliation; for all poſſible Aid will, I doubt not, be granted them,

" them, upon the great Principles which unite the " whole Body of the Diſſenters." Page 80, 81.

On this I muſt remark, that I am an entire Stranger to the Deſigns of Government. I live remote from the Arcana of thoſe in Power. Dr. *Kippis*, and Dr. *Stennett*, by their Connections, may think themſelves capable of giving the Alarm. I acknowledge, if ſuch ſhould be the Alteration, I fear little Happineſs would attend the Change, eſpecially if the Diſciples of *Arminius* imitate their Maſter. Tho' I thank Dr. *Kippis* for the proffered Aſſiſtance, I had rather truſt to the Mildneſs of the Church of *England*, in her preſent Form, as ſhe, to her Honor, has been very kind to the Diſſenters for above half a Century. I hope I ſhall not be among thoſe, that may want Aſſiſtance from that worthy Gentleman, but when I receive the Promiſe of a Favour, I love to receive it without REPROACH. What can that learned Profeſſor of Humanity mean by the Word RETALIATION? It bears an unkind REFLECTION. If the Event alluded to ſhould happen, I fear I muſt wave the promiſed Aſſiſtance (ſuppoſing the Conduct of that Gentleman and his Aſſociates is a Sample of Mildneſs and true Tolerance) and place my

Happineſs in a Readineſs " to ſuffer the Will of " God ; committing the Keeping of my Soul to " him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

I draw to a Concluſion, Sir, by declaring, that what I have wrote, is the Language of my Heart, reſpecting the Affairs touched upon in this Pamphlet, deteſting every Thing that is UNGENEROUS and CLANDESTINE; while, at the ſame Time, I have been ſolicitous to demonſtrate to the unprejudiced, the over-bearing Temper of thoſe from whom I think it my Duty to differ. If I appear ſingular, I hope I appear honeſt. " A Man of a worldly " Temper will ſwim with the Stream. But the " honeſt Man, ALONE, will riſque his Uſefulneſs, " and even his Subſiſtence in the World, to ad- " here to what he takes to be the Cauſe of Truth; " and in the ſteady Practice of what his Conſcience " directs him to, as his Duty."*

While I write, I feel a divine Charity glowing in my Breaſt towards ALL MANKIND; and tho' I heartily proteſt againſt Application to Government with the ſame Form of Prayer, with the ſame

* See Dr. BENSON's Funeral Sermon upon the late Rev. Mr. JAMES READ, Page 33.

ſame unreaſonable Teſt, which have been laid before the Legiſlature, I deſire not to interrupt any of my fellow diſſenting Subjects, in making a PROPER and DECENT Petition for Relief, whenever Relief becomes needful.

I wiſh to ſee the Period, when a Solicitude among Diſſenting Miniſters ſhall be more for the Eſtabliſhment and Spread of Truth, and Charity, than for temporal Eaſe and worldly Power.

If, Sir, I have, in the Courſe of my Letter, made any Miſrepreſentation of Facts, I ſhall be willing to acknowledge the Miſtake. I am ready to hope that ſome of my Brethren, who cordially embrace the Truths which have, upon the late Application, been treated with the baſeſt Contempt, by ſome of the Promoters of the Bill, will be animated to write more fully upon the Subject than I have done; to ſhew the Abſurdity of giving up our Sentiments (at leaſt their IMPORTANCE) by joining with Gentlemen, in Supplication for the Abolition of the Articles which THEY deny, but which WE think contain the only Foundation of our Hope. My Effort, perhaps, may excite an abler Hand to ſhew that TRUTH and CHARITY are inſeparably connected.—That to be ſteady for Truth, is the ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt Mark of Chriſtian Love; and that Scripture Zeal is no INTOLERANCE.

> " The Zeal and Example of the Weak, have often
> " rouſed to Action, and to Victory, the ſlumbering
> " Virtue of the Strong."
>
> BEATTIE on Truth, Page 335.

Before I conclude, give me Leave, Sir, to quote one Paſſage more from the very ingenious Dr. *Kippis*; a Paſſage which I apprehend merits the Notice of every Diſſenting Miniſter, and indeed the ſerious Attention of every Diſſenting Audience;

" With Regard to the Diſſenting Intereſt in
" particular, which they believe to be the In-
" tereſt of Scriptural Chriſtianity, it hath, per-
" haps, been more promoted by the Denial,
" than it would have been by the Grant of their
" Petition." Page 106.

Certainly if the Doctor's Hypotheſis is true, it muſt be more for the Promotion of " ſcrip-
" tural Chriſtianity," that no SUCH Application to Parliament ſhould be repeated.

A

As a freſh Attempt muſt be precarious, two Lines of a Poet may afford an uſeful Caution upon this Occaſion,

" Quod potes id tentes; operis ne pondere
" preſſus
" Succumbat labor; et fruſtra, tentata re-
" linquas."

I will only add, that from the general View we have taken of the Subject, our HAPPINESS appears to conſiſt in Thankfulneſs for, and a peaceful Enjoyment of, preſent Privileges, and that our grand Security is a conſtant Dependence upon HIM whoſe Shoulder ſuſtains the Weight of univerſal Government; he being the MIGHTY GOD, and PRINCE OF PEACE.

I am,

REVERENDSIR,

Yours, &c.

London,
Hoxton Square,
Oct. 30, 1779.

E. H.

ERRATA.

Page	Line	
25	16	For *Intollerance* read *Intolerance.*
26	10	
27	last	
30	6	for *Opinion*, read *Opinions.*
33	12	for *wide*, read *widely.*

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